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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

NSA review completed



DIA SITUATION REPORT

#58

DATE: 20 October 1973

TIME: 0600 EDT

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST HOSTILITIES

REFERENCE: DIA Analysis

DIA, NAVY
reviews
completed.1. GENERAL

a. (S/NFD) Israeli forces continue to concentrate on the Egyptian front while maintaining a defense posture in Syria. Egyptian efforts to contain the Israeli units operating west of the Canal have been at least temporarily successful. Egyptian reserves -- almost the last available -- and an armored division previously employed on the East Bank were used to blunt the Israeli thrusts. Major battles will probably occur today as the Egyptians counterattack and the Israelis attempt to regain freedom of movement for their columns. The Israeli and Egyptian air forces were both active over the front.

b. (S/NFD) Action on the Syrian front centered on attacks by combined Arab forces against the Israeli salient. Some limited gains were apparently made by the Jordanians and Iraqis, but the Israelis claim to have destroyed a number of Arab tanks during yesterday's fighting.

c. (TSU/NFD) The quality of support rendered by Arab allies continues to be erratic.

while, according to the IDF, Lebanon has now opened its borders to guerrilla cross-border activity. Pakistan continues its policy of positive support while the Algerian force may be deliberately dawdling en route. Iraq has committed some additional units

China has reportedly commenced sending aid to the Arabs, but the mercurial Ugandan President Idi Amin may be reconsidering his promise to send volunteers to the front.

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a. (S/NFD) The Egyptians as of 192100Z have had some success in containing Israeli armored columns driving toward Suez city and Jebel Jafra. The Egyptian 4th Armored Division was withdrawn from the East Bank on the 19th and used, probably along with elements of the 6th Mechanized Division, to stop the Israeli drive toward Suez city. This drive is commanded by MAJ GEN Abraham Adan, the chief of the Israeli Armor Corps, which may be an indicator of the importance the Israelis place on their West Bank operations. The Israeli drive toward the Jebel Jafra area has been held up by the Egyptian 3d Mechanized Infantry Division and the 35th Independent Armored Brigade. The 35th Brigade is a newly raised or reserve formation, and its ability to sustain continuous combat operations against the Israelis is questionable. The 3d Israeli column, consisting of paratroopers and infantry, was last reported driving to the west in the agricultural area south of the Ismailia Canal. They have penetrated at least as far as the Abu Suweir area, which places them 20 kilometers (12 nm.) west of the Suez Canal. The Egyptian 23d Mechanized Infantry Division may be in action against the Israelis in this area. There are unconfirmed reports that the Egyptians are using artillery emplaced in the East Bank bridgehead to harass Israeli units operating on the West Bank. The Israeli drive toward Suez city would be most affected by this tactic.

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d. (S/NFD) By all indications, the West Bank fighting on the 20th will be of major significance. If the Egyptians can contain or reduce the Israeli bridgehead, the fighting

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will be prolonged at least until the IDF can bring new units across the canal to reinforce the division-sized unit currently operating in the West Bank area. If, on the other hand, the Israelis can defeat Egyptian counterattacks and get their columns moving again, Egypt will have to face the decision of removing units from the East Bank or risk allowing the Israelis to overrun the entire west bank area. Egyptian withdrawal of units from the East Bank will make the troops remaining there increasingly vulnerable to a general Israeli offensive, which has not yet been opened but could begin at any time.

e. (U) Israel claims to have destroyed 70 Egyptian tanks on the 19th.

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g. (S/NFD/NDA/CD) The Egyptian Air Force reportedly conducted three attacks on the Israeli columns west of the Canal. During these attacks, the Israelis claim that a total of 25 Egyptian fighters were downed, and there were some tentative indications that partially trained pilots were used by Egypt. No IAF losses were reported.

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i. (S/NFD/NDA/CD) The Egyptians have apparently moved at least some of their SA-6/GAINFUL units across the Ismailia Canal, where Israeli ground forces cannot reach them. Egyptian commandos, reinforced by tanks, are being sent to SAM sites on the West Bank to improve their defensive capabilities.

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3. SYRIAN FRONT

a. (S/NFD/NDA/CD) Arab forces continued to attack the Israeli salient on the Syrian front yesterday. The Jordanian 40th Armored Brigade was involved in these attacks, reportedly advancing out of El Harra toward [redacted] and [redacted]. The Jordanians were assisted in this effort by the Iraqis and apparently made some progress in the direction of Jaba, while the Iraqis took Tal Aantar by 191445Z. The Jordanians reported that Israeli resistance was light.

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b. (U) An Israeli military spokesman indicated at 191815Z that a combined Syrian-Jordanian armored force attacked Israeli units in the southern sector of the front. The battle reportedly ended at 191530Z with 30 Arab tanks destroyed. Israel also claimed two Syrian aircraft were downed on the 19th.

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4. OTHER ARAB ACTIVITY

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b. SAUDI ARABIA

(C/NFD) The 10 Saudi LIGHTNING aircraft that deployed to Taif on 11 October were under the command of a retired British RAF wing commander who is currently employed by the Saudi Government. Excluding the commander, the mean age of the Saudi pilots is 22 and their proficiency is rated by competent US observers as about 25 percent below the inherent capabilities of their aircraft.

c. FEDAYEEN

(S/NFD) Jordan remains under pressure from other Arab leaders to permit cross-border guerrilla operations to be launched from its territory. However, King Hussein has steadfastly refused to countenance these demands. On the other hand, the IDF believes that Lebanon has opened its borders for nightly crossings by hundreds of fedayeen to facilitate attacks on settlements in northern Israel.

plans to retaliate against Lebanon once their military situation permits.

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d. ALGERIA

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5. OTHER ACTIVITY

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b. WEST GERMANY-EGYPT

(U) A West German news agency reported on 19 October that a West German firm was contacted by Egypt concerning the possible salvaging of the 16 ships stranded in the Suez Canal since the 1967 war.

c. ISRAELI MANPOWER

1) (S/NFD/NDA/CD) According to Israeli authorities, the Israeli general mobilization figure as of 19 October has not exceeded 60 percent, while the air force has mobilized only about 10 percent of its reserves. This latter figure, if correct, may be a reflection of the fact that the IAF actually had more pilots on active duty than it had aircraft available to fly.

2) (U) An Israeli radio broadcast of 19 October reported that some 900 wounded Israeli troops had recovered sufficiently to return to duty. No indication of the technical specialties of the personnel involved was given.

d. PAKISTAN

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e. PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA-EGYPT

(S/NFD) The PRC is reportedly giving \$300 million and 100 tons of food to Egypt.

f. SOVIET

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2) NAVY

(S) There have been no major changes in the status of the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron. A POLNOCNY-class medium landing ship previously reported as being east of Crete was sighted off the southwestern coast of that island. A second POLNOCNY may also be in the same area. The minesweeper previously located south of Cyprus has transited to a position about 150 nautical miles west of Cyprus.

Sighting reports indicate, however, that the KHO-SHI-MIN's deck cargo is trucks and other-type vehicles, and the SMENA's deck cargo is oxidizer tanks -- possibly for use with SA-2/GUIDELINE missiles.

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